

REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 6-13, 16, 17, 19-26, 30, 31 and 33-44 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 10, 11, 13-15, 18-20, 23, 24, 26, 42 and 43 are finally rejected. Claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 25 are objected to.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 18, 27-29 and 32 are cancelled, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and claims 3, 6-13, 16, 17, 19-26, 30 and 33-44 are amended. Claims 3, 6-9, 12, 16, 17, 19-22, 25, 30 and 33-35 are rewritten into independent form. No new matter is added by any of these amendments.

Claims 27-41 and 44 are withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected Group. Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of the process claims upon determination of allowance of the article claims.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Final Office Action indicates that claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 25 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 3, 6-9, 12 are rewritten into independent form to recite the features of claim 3 and intervening claims. Claims 16, 19-22 and 25 are rewritten into independent form to recite the features of claim 14 and intervening claims. Further, claims 10, 11, 13, 23, 24, 26, 42 and 43 are amended for proper dependency. Claims 6, 7, 19 and 20 are rewritten into independent form to present subject matter that Applicants assert is allowable. Withdrawn claims 30 and 33-35 are rewritten into independent form to expedite rejoinder and allowance.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

**I. Amendment Entry after Final Rejection**

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: a) place the application in condition for allowance (for all the reasons discussed herein); b) do not raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration; c) place the application in better condition for appeal (if necessary); and d) address formal requirements of the Final Rejection and preceding Office Action.

The allowable dependent claims have been rewritten into independent form based on the features of the originally filed claims from which the allowable claims depend.

Accordingly, entry of this Amendment is appropriate under §1.116 and respectfully requested. The foregoing amendments do not raise any new issues after Final Rejection. Therefore, entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments place the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment.

## **II. The Pending Claims Define Over the Applied References**

The Final Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,327,747 to Nakashima. This rejection is moot with respect to cancelled claims 1, 2 and is respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims.

Applicants assert that Nakashima does not teach or suggest the all the features of claims 5 and 6. Further, the Final Office Action does not address the features recited in these claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 be withdrawn.

The Final Office Action further rejects claims 1, 10, 11, 23, 24, 42 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,254,976 to Ono. This rejection is moot with respect to cancelled claim 1, and is respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims.

Claims 10, 11 and 42 depend from allowable claim 3. Claims 23, 24 and 43 depend from allowable claim 16. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 be withdrawn.

The Final Office Action further rejects claims 7, 14, 15 and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ono in view of Nakashima. This rejection is moot with respect to cancelled claims 14, 15 and 18, and is respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims.

Applicants assert that Ono does not teach or suggest the all the features of claims 7, 19 and 20. Further, the Final Office Action does not address the features recited in claims 7,

19 and 20. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

The Final Office Action further rejects claims 1, 13, 14 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ono in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,057,666 to Drummond, Jr. (Drummond). This rejection is moot with respect to cancelled claims 1 and 14, and is respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims.

Claims 13 and 26 depend from allowable claims 3 and 16, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

### **III. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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